



Orange EDIC: An Educated Choice for Butterfield School Reuse

OEDIC June 2025

Agenda

What is OEDIC?

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What is the OEDIC mission?

The Orange Economic Development & Industrial Corporation is a quasi-public entity with a mission to drive business development and create jobs in the Town of Orange.

Why OEDIC?

Background

- Under Mass. General Law, EDICs “may implement economic development projects designed to decrease the unemployment rate and eliminate decadent and blighted open areas in a city or town”
- Orange is fortunate to have one of just 11 EDICs in the Commonwealth

OEDIC Accomplishments

- Developed Randall Pond Industrial Park
 - Home to Dean’s Beans, Impact Nano, Echo Industries, George Hunt solar field, Cannapy, Inc., Clearview Composting, and other businesses
- Paying \$113K/yr in taxes and employing about 120 people
- All at no cost to the Town of Orange
- Website <https://developingorange.com/>

How is OEDIC governed?

- Seven-member Board of Directors
- Knowledge and expertise across key areas
 - Industrial & economic development
 - Finance
 - Real estate
 - Municipal government
 - Low-income representation

Who is leading OEDIC today?

Board of Directors

- **Trusted and experienced community leaders**
- **Deeply committed to betterment of Orange**
 - Tom Sexton, chair
 - Karl Bittenbender, treasurer
 - Liza Hurlburt
 - Kristina Dorn
 - Chris Woodcock
 - Maria Bull

Butterfield School: History



- Former school sits on 1.58 acres at 94 S. Main St., about 150 yards from Riverfront Park and adjacent to downtown Orange
- Original building dates to 1878
- Between 1883 and 1903, at the height of the town's prosperity, there was a large expansion
- Final renovation took place around 1925
- School was closed in 2015

Butterfield School: Current State



- Despite sitting empty for a decade with no heat and little maintenance, the building is sound, according to a 2023 feasibility study by SSV Architects
<https://www.townoforange.org/DocumentCenter/View/762/Final-Butterfield-School-Report->
- Asbestos remediation of the old furnace and making the building accessible were the only major identified concerns

Butterfield School: Potential Reuse



Option One: Multi-Family - New Addition



Option Two: Senior Center - New Addition



- Feasibility study identified three likely reuse possibilities:
 - Housing
 - Senior Center
 - Town offices combined with a new senior center
- Final reuse decisions and scope of project are still to be determined

Butterfield School: A Case for Housing Reuse

- Orange faces a housing shortage, with few available units for sale or rent
 - Orange's housing stock decreased by 6% between 2012 and 2022
 - Tight housing market limits options for residents and perspective newcomers
- 20% of Orange's population is 65 or older – and the 65+ percentage is expected to increase to 31% by 2020
- The overall population of Orange will decline by one third in the next 25 years according the latest data from the UMass Donahue Institute

Butterfield School: A Case for Housing Reuse

- The potential for developing additional new-construction units on Butterfield School property would create population density near downtown
 - Drive a need for services
 - Provide a boost for existing businesses
- Butterfield site is centrally located -- proximity to Millers River, highways, health services, grocery shopping, and other amenities

Transferring Butterfield School to OEDIC

- Decision on transferring ownership to be made under Article 21 this evening
- Article 21 asks voters to authorize Board of Selectmen to transfer the property to Orange EDIC to facilitate “beneficial reuse and redevelopment of the site”
- Can expect fair, open and informative discussion on town meeting floor and at subsequent public information sessions

Key reasons for ownership change

- Idea to entrust OEDIC with ownership initiated and supported by Board of Selectmen
- Strong belief that OEDIC is best positioned to drive successful, efficient reuse
 - OEDIC has privilege of focus to make Butterfield School reuse its top priority
 - OEDIC can leverage its powers under Chapter 121C to move more quickly through the RFP, bidding and project execution processes
- Multiple benefits to a successful project
 - Preserve and reuse historic building
 - Generate tax revenue
 - Address pressing community needs
 - Build on previous OEDIC success – Randall Pond Industrial Park and Rodney Hunt Company partnership

Why OEDIC, Why now?

- The building has been vacant for ten years
- With its broad authority and successful history, OEDIC is best positioned to make it productive again as quickly as possible
- OEDIC will focus all its resources on Butterfield to get it back on the tax rolls and to address a critical need in Orange

Next steps

- OEDIC due diligence
- Community engagement
- Hire project manager
- Planning, scoping
- Identify funding sources and incentives
- Settle on best possible reuse
- Execute the plan
- Deliver best possible results for the town of Orange